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Pell Favors Clipping Policy Powers Of CIA

By BULKLEY GRIFFIN
Times Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) is constantly under Capitol criticism and among the critics is Senator Claiborne Pell, D-R.I., who speaks from experience with the agency both as a senator and as a foreign service officer in Eastern Europe.

With many others who want to curb the CIA, Pell favors two main steps: Make the agency solely an intelligence-gathering outfit; name a small Congressional watchdog committee to oversee the CIA.

Today the Rhode Island senator deplored the "CIA's tendency to engage in foreign policy to create it, to tamper with it, to control it."

A Congressional watchdog committee has long been sought by many. Such a proposal, advanced by Senate majority leader Mike Mansfield came to a vote in 1956 and was beaten 27 to 59. Those voting for the proposition included the then Sen. John Fitzgerald Kennedy of Massachusetts, Senator Pastore and the then Senator Green of Rhode Island, Senators Margaret Smith and Payne of Maine, the present head of the Senate foreign relations committee, Sen. Fulbright, and the present assistant Democratic Senate leader, Sen. Humphrey.

To the repeated assertion that the CIA's activities are too secret to be outlined to congressmen, Senator Pell retorted that members of a small Congressional committee "can certainly be trusted with CIA secrets. They are surely as trustworthy as the fairly numerous persons in sundry government positions that presently receive such information."

The Rhode Island senator, emphasizing he believes that many able and brilliant persons work for CIA, listed a few of the good and bad CIA accomplishments, and noted his own disillusioning experience with the agency in connection with the Cuban invasion.

A couple of CIA triumphs include "the tapping of Soviet telephone lines in the Eastern sector of Berlin in 1955" and the 1956 achievement of a CIA agent who "managed to smuggle out the text of Khrushchev's secret speech denouncing the crimes of Josef Stalin before the 20th Congress," said Pell.

On the other hand, CIA "was responsible for the Cuban debacle" and appears to have been "the guilty party in Laos" where it engineered the overthrow of the regime the U.S. was supporting, to name a couple of misdeeds.

The CIA's sensing and judgment are bad, Pell indicated. This "political naivete" was largely responsible "for the errors of judgment in Latin America and Japan (when Vice President Nixon was stoned and Press Secretary Hagerty spat upon by hostile crowds). Perhaps this is where a joint Congressional committee to watch over the CIA would solve some of the problems," he stated.

In December of 1960, a few months before the Cuban invasion, Senator Pell visited Cuba and on his return stated publicly that the Cuban people did not appear dissatisfied with the Castro regime. Moreover, just a few weeks before the invasion, Pell told high CIA officials, he said, that any use of force against Cuba would be a failure. Yet the CIA thought the natives would rise in support of an invasion and went ahead with the disastrous adventure.

Summing up regarding the CIA operational activities, as distinct from its intelligence-gathering, Pell judged that "on balance the United States national interest may well have lost more than it has gained."



SENATOR PELL

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